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HULBERT, JOHN RYAN. immaculate perceptions and other poems.
(1968) Thesis Adviser: Dr. Robert Watson. 35 pages.

The poems in this collection are divided into two sections. Those in the first half are the result of readings in the work of Carl Jung, the recording and analysis of dreams over a period of two years, and contact with two individuals concerned with what might roughly be classified as dream poetry: George Abbe, Poet in Residence at Russell Sage College, and Alan Jackson, a young Scottish poet living in Edinburgh. The poems in the second section rely more heavily than those in the first section upon the workings of the "conscious" as opposed to the "unconscious" mind. My writing has been greatly influenced by the works of Rainer Maria Rilke (J.B. Leishman's translations), T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, E.E. Cummings, and Dylan Thomas.

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This thesis (dissertation) has been approved by the following
committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University
of North Carolina at Greensboro.

by

John R. Hulbert

Thesis (Dissertation)
Adviser

Robert Watson

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Jay Applewhite
Wm. D. H.
Ray, C.

Greensboro
March, 1968

April 30, 1968

Date of Examination

Approved by

Robert Watson

Thesis Adviser

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Thesis (Dissertation)
Adviser

Robert Watson

Oral Examination
Committee Members

James Applewhite
Warr Dobbey
Guy Owen

April 30, 1968

Date of Examination

immaculate perceptions and other poems

immaculate perceptions

the birth	2
the divinity school	3
the drive	4
ascent	5
the city of god.	6
planetarium	7
the concert	8
saturday morning	9
the supermarket.	10
the diver	11
the countryside.	12
the corridor	13
the ship	14
portrait of a lady and her comforters	15
the studio.	16
metamorphosis	17

other poems

october park	19
winter walk	20
soho stripper	21
after-dinner sildes of the honeymoon	22
the professor	24
OO sonnet	25
love's grin glare stare wearied	26
varieties of down	27
thing of the abstract man.	28
i lay awake waiting	29
plateau	30
aubade	31
zoo	32
when in the flesh cell soul stuff quivered	33
out of myself	34
the thrust.	35

immaculate perceptions

the birth

deep, but where the water sank to shallow pools
i watched the running sand beneath my feet;
the river's source was stone and all around
cracked crystal rained, then like an operatic whale
the cavern's waste squeaked back on rusty wheels
revealing vines and tendrils dripping with a diamond slime

a sun came stalking through the dense
to draw stage curtains with a fiery claw;
i found myself, blinded, in a strange familiar damp

worlds swelled out from in me as i curled
then a dog barked and the great bitch staggered
clutching at the railings, gave one final heave
and i wormed mucous downwards to the pavement...
cutting the cord with an old tin can she reeled away
in drunken agony, leaving me senselessly shrivelled

the divinity school

for gordon ennis

i knew it'd cost too much
the minute i laid eyes on the windows
with their dressed up dummies

and the man at the front door was polite
which led me to believe i'd find out why
when i bought something

the elevator took us up only to the second floor;
the rest of the way was on foot

there, in the middle of the room,
they fought at the counter for pieces of cloth,
each one claiming they'd seen it first

with not a little effort i edged my way
into the crowd, reached through several arms
and picked an item from a tray

when i saw the price tag i must have fainted
because when i woke up i was in a cab
on the way back to my hotel

the drive

after having seen the city parking lots
i drove off into the country
and stalled it going up a hill,
went to sit under a tree
until my ears got used to the altitude

the engine was going when i woke up

it purred as i jumped to my feet

i struggled with a batch of keys
swearing at the door for being locked

my hands

tense

fumbled

would not let me in

so i smashed a window,
found the pedals in the back seat

stretched between i struggled to release the brake,
struck my head against the horn

it stuck:

by the time i tore out the wires
the engine had stopped

ascent

up through the blue ceiling of sky
straight up
past the hanging gardens
of peach coloured stone

then

at incredible speed
columns of five digit numbers
registering thousands
and tens of thousands
changing so fast
i could not read them

all in black and white

until faster and faster
colour was surpassed
and all became fused
in a blur of white

then i awoke

still dreaming
could not find a pencil
or an unused scrap of paper

and when i did
parents and wife came in
pestering

i shouted

pained
and they left me
in peace

the city of god

the city of god city of light
is being lowered hand over hand
an incandescent lantern
on piranesi's chains

shadows lie burnt into bridges

this is the ford god the light
the brother beast the light
mars in a bowler
handles the chains

planetarium

the sky blinked like the lid of a hippo
 chalked by criss-crossing lines and numbers
 as we find it before a performance

beneath the great zeiss projector
 lay a tiger, putrid, slain by pygmies,
 wheeled in to serve as a sacrifice

and the whining globes turned on the carcass,
 scarlet razors alive at every angle
 tearing the once proud terror to mince

the concert

the flow had been unbroken for an hour or so
but now, as he called for a crescendo
men and women coughed behind his back
drowning out the sound

he turned at once
to face the hall, the music at his heels
dissolving in the weep of strings

he turned
again, poised for silence
to see his assistant, score in hand
leaving the stage, could not remember
what was being played

clutching the baton
in desperation he kept time to a simple waltz,
metronome for eighty men without instruments
who, unseated, talked amongst themselves

saturday morning

we arrived early to sit at his feet,
the old wooden hall creaking our entry

we had supposed he would come by jackass
or subway

through the window the courtyard
was blazing with cameras

wrapped in ermine
and mother and onyx-eyed daughters, the
master, his name bronzed on the side of the bus,
deafened, spoke with concern to reporters

we rushed downstairs and the square was empty

we rushed back up but the hall had been filled,
two gaudy trees propped against the barred doors

still, hints of strange music seeped out to us

the supermarket

in aisle three the commander pinned stars,
hung ribbons on cubs and marines
while muzak hovered clouds of confusing urge

a cardboard take-one woman with peg breasts
dangling salted pretzels, propped against
the candies, sirened the shop's closing

stretchers of virgins rolled to the butcher,
his trim knives and wide brown paper
while meat danced on counters under the red lights

the diver

for berthia harris

"...who, in her nipple and lip tight pink leotards
and from a height of four million light years
is diving, bathed in the light of the great comets,
through the constellations listed in your programs,
(of which there are still a limited number of copies
being sold on a first come first serve basis)
in a jackknife position, into this damp rose..."

the fanfaring snare drummer, at the end of a month,
suffered a stroke. the ringmaster put out an eye
with his whip. the bears broke loose and the crowd
faded home to sue. the circus folded, packed up
and trained off for waukeegan, snapping giraffes
at every low bridge. the old rose shrivelled
and the earth tilted off a degree.

the countryside

it was the same every town i drove through,
old men jeered lifting their glasses in a mock toast,
women staring from the half light of doorways
and the grey flaking walls and the eternal siesta

then out onto the plain or up another hill
or braking into what seemed a bottomless valley
i followed the stream i hoped would lead me to the sea

once, kilometers ago, a tiny face
peeped through a loose boarded window
and smiled as i raced by; but that was long ago

and then, my head throbbing from the sun,
hands grew numb at the wheel
resisting the pull to one side or the other

the corridor

this was wrong; it was late, late evening
in the wrong building, the clocks telling stopped time

my books were shingles; too heavy, too many...
i forgot them on a bench,
hurried to the elevator, pressing impatient

offices and classrooms were locked flat,
the tiles ice, endlessly narrowing

the door jerked back and i stepped in,
pushing the highest button turned to see him,
note-bound, striding intent rehearsing the lecture

it shut too quick and i felt the rise, humming,
motored out of thought for minutes, hours,
then opened to the same floor

he rushed by me, pale, speechless,
fumbling for a stair well

the ship

for pat peters

it was a laugh the great ship cargoed, carving the streets,
tidal waving the pavement through store fronts

the enormous hull rubbered round corners

and the train station clock
and the day go by day go by shopkeepers' face
froze

 fear-still;
shoppers with bundles
clung to the crests of the grey waves

then the unheard tightly strung gulliver laugh in the hold
heard itself chuckle, the echo just tinly bounced back
so it sucked in its breath for a bellow
and blew:

rivets unbuttoned,
unbendables bent,
and buying and selling went washing away in the wake

and the split ship
 sank
 curled to a grin

portrait of a lady and her comforters

and they brought her back
like charred paper reghostly glows,
a plumber's mannequin

one of them worked the heart pump plunger,
another wrenching the breath bag

a third came to her dream tent promising legs and ears,
long life plugged to a new sex,
piping in dinner, flushing it down to the bucket

the studio

two cameras rolled automatic or free on silences
of rubber wheels, their faces of mouths of eye knobs
spinning circles in circles cunningly careless
through focus

sweeping in loops of heavy nods
camera panned camera while the monitor screened them,
screened itself; on top, a large bare clock
inched perfect seconds in retrograde

the program was over or yet to begin

between partitions: a desk, board, and false window
(a black construction paper frame pasted on a faded print:
a country road with its split fence leading to a bridge,
barn, home, and low hills caught in grade school fall)

chalked harsh on the blackboard, an impossible equation
overhead, and beneath flat trellised wire vines,
long pipes hung from chains, lights vised
or swaying loose like spots for trapeze

the cameras' snaked cables, phallus thick,
wound to the corner where a woman's plaster mannequin,
grecian, gauzed in robin's blue, stood heel-piped
to a square steel plate

and only the sound
of splashed light, the distant coming of new air

metamorphosis

the chrome beast breathed enormous grey
until beneath the slick soul shell,
like a hand felt heart beat or sex swell,
organs throbbed in lullaby sway
and the riveted paint skin rust-fell away

the body's motor muscled pink
and tendril tendons corn-ear grew
humming up and singing through
the prone car garden, heard the clink
transpose itself to feel and think

an oily rainbow soaked the ground,
bled vein-back through lengths of hose;
the pedals, lily pads, grew toes
and bumpers drew elbowed arms around
the pulse and pumping adam mound

October park

other poems

spoke and shattering the water
 I look up and the sky comes over me like silk
 only a bloodbird roars through

the ground is spread with sparkling robes and split gardens
 and still falling and falling
 stiff cold-birds are stuck in branches

and a speck of high caught sun
 slides sliding along the spider's way line
 as he flopped off at last into the blue open

october park

geese silently shattering the water
i look up and the sky comes over me like silk;
only a blackbird razors through

the ground is spread with crackling rubies and split garnets
and still falling and falling;
puff half-halo clouds are stuck in branches

and a speck of high caught sun
glides sliding along the spider's wavy line
to be flapped off at last into the blue open

winter walk

the trees are glass
in falling snow filled cones of street lamp light
as each chill star
pricks its way across the perfect sky above me
and the slick white sheets of field beneath my feet

i am wrapped in scarves of breath
moving in air undreamably pure for the slant walk home

soho stripper

an englishman read his paper,
two greeks laughed,
while i stared
and tried a smile

eyes licked and assaulted
until she stood
naked as rimbaud's venus,
unshaven beneath her hand

after-dinner slides of the honeymoon

click

he was all puffed up when they fished him out

click

that's the death mask of nijinsky...i think
its going out on loan soon

click

they poured gasoline over all the books first:
what a blaze!

click

the village must have been bombed just a few
minutes before we drove through

click

she walked right out in front of us...we must
have been doing nearly 70

click

ah, here they are...i think i told you about
the photographer we took with us on our
wedding night

click

click

click

the trees were lovely that time of year

click

i ran out of flash bulbs here...you see that
misty speck at the bottom of the well?
that's henry just going down for the second
time

click

i don't remember taking a picture of a
black cat

click

there, those drapes go so well with the
furniture...see the afterbirth in the corner?

click

these are the mid-wives i was telling you
about on their way back from the garden
where they buried the foetus

the professor

skipping through the middle ages one night
he trips on a hard line in aquinas

a little thought, the matter is settled;
plato's pupil himself gives him guidance

he understands toynbee, malthus and marx,
being and time, the world and the ideal,
the space-time continuum, the boer war

and he owns a small house painted yellow
which weathers in the suburbs like his wife

and his stomach gives him trouble while his
daughter's book costs double, though deductible

and his pupils, they all love him, they all
wonder at his scope and hope they may cope
with life as easily as he; hope its free

00 sonnet

for mary roberts

God, look out for that woman on the zebra.
 you're doing well over 110 in your
 supercharged V-8 blown Bently-Biretta
 brain. what is this, the devil's Cook's tour?
 no, don't claw at the wheel. and don't cough
 4-lettered foam at me. and don't worry about THEM.
 and don't U-2 the rest stop. just turn off
 your sandblaster eyes.

relax.

over.

M.

thinkThink thinkThink thinkThink thinkThink thinkTing
 thinkThink thinkThink thinkClunk thinkThink thinkPing
 thinkThink thinkClank thinkClunk thinkThink thinkTing
 thinkThink thinkPlunk thinkClunk thinkClank thinkPing
 thinkClink thinkPlink thinkClank thinkClunk thinkSpoing
 thinkClump

thinkBump

thinkBlap

thinkBlump

thinkPoinng!

love's grin glare stare wearied

love's grin glare stare wearied
burning out the smooth unknown computer's weave
to leave these buttons of raucus light
in Tilt-like fever

now the unstoppable foot-foots
of crude clank ganglion
and reruns
of the old low dark soaring

varieties of down

leaves falling like sickened pendulums
outline my mimic will

opens once more
my trap door death bed bottomless dream

thing of the abstract man

i know nothing of why, what, or when they did
except they were behind me, far off in silences believed

i shed look and feel that hindered my spin
but they were too quick or too many away for knowing

now, finally twisting on not even a plane,
without why or willing, i ghost a thinking of them

i lay awake waiting

i lay awake waiting.
but he never.

and i touched me.
quietly. deep.

all that we never.
till now. now.

breath through mouth full open
i listened for silences.

all that we never.
till now. now.

he stirred. i shifted
to sleep. burning.

plateau

groping our way to this white plateau
i passed through your body
and took on your limbs like a shield

though dark winds surround us,
when i touch you, your back growing numb,
i am no longer falling

aubade

our shadows jiggled on the wall,
the fire hued from mud-bark to jewel
to flaked grey morning ash

light tore us day-wide,
floating the sheets
bright like the snow of winter ponds

zoo

(to be read like a toy
wound tight
and running down)

tigercat pussy and sharp and roar
and claw and claw
and cotton and candy
and elephant's trunk
and suck and peanut

and monkey and gibber
and bounce and jump and fingers and swing
and walk and walk and gibber and daddy

and pee-pee

and hump and rough
and spit and smell
and yes and sit and up and up
and humpidy humpidy
sway and sick and daddy and hug

and up balloon up.up..up...up....up

and walk and walk
and water and black and bark and fish

and walk and walk
and bird and bird and bird and bird
and peck and peck and peck and peck
and feathers and feathers
and feathers
and feathers and daddy
and feathers...

when in the flesh cell soul stuff quivered

when in the flesh cell soul stuff quivered
 (bear's pendulum shiftings,
 fox's rounding prow closer caged)
when in monk's mind sea's time rocked too hard
thought was floating penny shows
 of fingerless magicians
and seeing shrank to hug-less knots of air
and city big ships of sleep the claw waves clenched
 went buckled under

out of myself

out of myself
a cry of longing
conditioning me to receive

that a clear voice has spoken
is never enough,
dreams only last until morning

but memory of flight never dies,
new hope of ascent
is born each day

the thrust

the forces of every sphere
meet at the spear's tip,
all wavering faith
hope and imagination,
pinning possibility
immutably to fact

that a panorama exists
is of no consequence,
only the thrust
which ultimately pierces